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ISLAMIC FOCUS

EARTH QUAKES A TIME FOR REFLECTION

the Majestic MOUNTAINS

Surah
Mumin

THE LESSONS WE LEARN

Ahlan Wasahlan...

FROM THE EDITOR

The February 2023 earthquakes which struck Turkey and Syria saw over 52,000 people lose their lives. It is an opportune moment to answer some questions surrounding earthquakes. In our article, we explore why earthquakes take place, what lessons we need to take, what positives we can draw and what our response ought to be. We also look at the role earthquakes played in the past and what significance they will have in the future. The article concludes with some notable earthquakes in Muslim lands.

The article on mountains takes a fascinating look at mountains as a setting for incidents in the lives of the Prophets ﷺ. We explore their purpose in the broader scheme of life and look at the interesting question of whether they have any sense of perception. The article also looks at lessons we can learn from mountains and the role they will be playing

as settings for events close to Qiyamah.

Our Noble Quran feature highlights lessons from Surah Mumin, the 40th chapter of the Noble Quran. We look at the amazing effect of these verses in reforming lives and as a means of protection.

The snapshot of Fraxinet reveals a forgotten chapter from the history of Muslims in Europe. Marvel at how small groups of Muslims ruled parts of France, Italy and Switzerland and controlled the European trade routes in the 10th century.

The hadith verification series shines a spotlight on questions regarding the Noble Quran and the authenticity of certain Hadith in this regard.

Muhammad Badsha
(Moulana)

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EARTHQUAKES

The February 2023 earthquakes which struck Turkey and Syria saw over 52,000 people lose their lives. It is an opportune moment to answer some questions surrounding earthquakes and take some lessons.

WHY DO EARTHQUAKES OCCUR?

Hazrat Anas رضي الله عنه narrates that a person asked Hazrat Aeysha رضي الله عنها about the cause of earthquakes. She replied that when certain sins take place openly then the earth is commanded to shake a little to give people a wake-up call. If they don't repent, then it becomes more serious and the buildings are crushed on them.

AMONG THE SINS SHE MENTIONED WAS:

1. People commit adultery openly as though it is permissible. All sexual activities beyond the marriage scenario of husband and wife will fall in this category. Homosexuality, lesbianism, extra marital affairs, masturbation, looking at pictures of scantily dressed people, pornography and flirting are all aspects of adultery. There was a time within Muslim communities when sex outside marriage would be regarded as a serious matter. It is now brushed aside as though it is just one of those things.

2. People consume intoxicants. Alcohol consumption has crept into the Muslim community where previously it was relatively unheard of. Drugs have entrapped

numerous good people and destroyed their lives and happiness.

3. People play on flutes and other musical instruments. Music has pervaded our lives on every corner and every device. It has exploded into society at all levels.

These are some of the reasons that cause earthquakes to occur.

The person then asked the next logical question and something we would naturally ask, "Is it then a punishment for the people afflicted with earthquakes?" Hazrat Aeysha رضي الله عنها replied, "No. In fact it is a lesson, mercy and blessing for a Muslim. It is a punishment for the disbeliever." Hazrat Anas رضي الله عنه said, "I have never experienced such joy from a Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ after that as I experienced on hearing this particular Hadith."

Another narration informs us that red winds, earthquakes, sinking of the earth and dreadful calamities will occur when Zakaat is taken as a penalty, and there is an abundance of music and intoxicating substances.

EARTHQUAKES ARE A TIME FOR MUSLIMS TO REFLECT AND TAKE LESSON

1. Ibn Qayyim رحمه الله says, "Earthquakes are among the signs which Allah ﷻ uses to make His slaves develop fear." It should give a Muslim a jolt and an impetus to examine his or her life. This world is one of cause and effect. We are taught that tectonic plates collide to produce earthquakes. This natural cause does not negate the fact that there is a Creator, Who in His Wisdom sets the plates in motion due to certain factors such as sins.

2. There was an earth tremor in the time of the Prophet ﷺ. He remarked that, "Your Sustainer wants you to turn to Him, so turn to Him in repentance."

3. Umar ibn Abdul Aziz رضي الله عنه said that earthquakes are a manifestation of Allah ﷻ's retaliation so that the slave turns to Him in repentance.

4. This was also reflected in the words of Umar رضي الله عنه that the earth shakes due to some new sin being committed.

The cause of earthquakes are the sins of man being committed openly on a global scale. The wisdom is to urge man to turn to Allah ﷻ in repentance.

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله explains that at times earthquakes might occur solely due to the natural cause and effect which Allah ﷻ has put in place, while at other times they occur due to our sins.

EARTHQUAKES ARE A MERCY FOR THE MUSLIM

Losing one's life in an earthquake by being crushed to death in a building is a means of attaining martyrdom. There are several things mentioned in the Hadith which grant a person the rank of martyrdom, among them drowning, dying due to a stomach illness, burning to death and being crushed by a building.

At times we might be unable to reach the highest ranks of Paradise through our deeds alone. These occurrences are the excuses to then allow us to reach those lofty heights. A martyr is allowed to fly around after death and even see Paradise before the day of Judgment.

Earthquakes either give us a wakeup call or gain us higher ranks in Paradise. Or we might happen to have some sins to our credit for which we have not asked forgiveness. In this case the earthquake becomes a means of wiping out those sins. "My nation is one which is shown mercy such that they will not be punished with everlasting punishment in the Hereafter. Rather, their punishment takes the form of trials, earthquakes and killings in this world." (Abu Dawood)

EARTHQUAKES WERE A MEANS OF ERADICATING STUBBORNLY SINFUL NATIONS OF THE PAST

1. The people of Madyan were destroyed in an earthquake which took their lives. "But they rejected him (Prophet Shuaib alaihis salaam), so an overwhelming earthquake struck them and they fell lifeless in their homes." (Noble Quran, 29:37)

2. 70 people from the nation of Musa alaihis salaam were struck by an earthquake: Noble Quran, 7:155.

3. The people of Prophet Salih alaihis salaam were destroyed in an earthquake: Noble Quran, 7:78.

4. The towns of Prophet Loot alaihis salaam were overturned which meant that the earth shook for them as well.

EARTHQUAKES ARE A SIGN OF THE LAST DAY

1. There will be three earthquakes in Madinah Munawwarah during the time of Dajjal. The Prophet ﷺ said, "There will be no town which Dajjal will not enter except Makkah and Madinah, and there will be no road (of both) but the angels will be standing in rows guarding it against him. Then Madinah will shake with its inhabitants thrice (i.e., three earthquakes will take place) and Allah will expel all the nonbelievers and the hypocrites from it." (Bukhari)

2. The Prophet ﷺ said, "The Last Day will not come until knowledge will be taken away (by the death of religious learned men), earthquakes will be very frequent, time will pass quickly, afflictions will appear, murders will increase and money will overflow amongst you." (Bukhari) The National Earthquake Information Center (USA) now locates about 20,000 earthquakes around the globe each year, or approximately 55 per day. These have shown a marked increase in the past 40-50 years.

3. The Day of Resurrection will see the earth and mountains destroyed by earthquakes: "On the Day the earth and mountains will shake

violently, and mountains will be reduced to dunes of shifting sand." (Noble Quran, 73:14) The land will become flat without any valleys or mountains.

4. The Noble Quran details the horrors of the Day of Resurrection, "O mankind! Fear your Lord! Verily, the earthquake of the Hour is a terrible thing." (Noble Quran, 22:1)

THE POSITIVES FROM THE RECENT EARTHQUAKES.

What was evident in the recent earthquakes was the level of faith of the people. An old lady was asking for a scarf to cover her head before she could be pulled out of the rubble. A man was pulled out after some days while reciting the Noble Quran. An old man was asking for water to make Wudhu to read Salaah even while still stuck among the concrete slabs.

This is a lesson for us to never write off anyone. This is even more applicable to Turkey where the signs of Islam were suppressed in the secularist agenda from the 1920's. Adnan Menderes was the Prime Minister of Turkey from 1950-60. He was tried and hanged by the army for legalising the Athan which had been banned, reopening thousands of Masjids across the country and saying that there would be no problem in restoring the Khilafah if the people wished.

Today the tables have been turned and the resurgence of Islam in public life in Turkey is evident everywhere. Where once there was little sign of Islam it is now flourishing. You can never know how a person can change their life for the better, so never write anyone off.



WHAT SHOULD BE OUR RESPONSE?

1. Turn to Allah ﷻ.

"Then why, when Our punishment came to them, did they not humble themselves? But their hearts became hardened, and Satan made attractive to them that which they were doing." (Noble Quran, 6:43)

"Turn passionately towards your Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes to you, after which you will not be helped." (Noble Quran, 39:54)

"And follow the best of what has been sent down to you from your Lord before the punishment comes to you suddenly when you do not even expect." (Noble Quran, 39:55)

2. Engage in Salaah.

"If the Prophet ﷺ was distressed by anything, he would pray." (Abu Dawood). The Ulama state that if any natural occurrences like excessive rain, snow, lightning occur, one should engage in Salaah.

3. Have concern for those suffering.

Umar ibn Abdul Aziz ؓ encouraged people to give charity when earthquakes occurred. We should assist in any way possible and not judge those affected. Make Dua for them.

4. Appreciate.

Earthquakes should cause us to appreciate the normal times when the earth is still and we can go about our activities with ease. "Allah is the One who made for you the earth a place to live." (Noble Quran, 40:64)

5. Accept the Divine Decree.

Once a person accepts that Allah ﷻ wants that particular occurrence for him at that time, it becomes a means of attaining mercy from Allah ﷻ.

SOME NOTEWORTHY EARTHQUAKES

1. Aleppo in 1138 in the rule of Nuruddin Zangi ؓ experienced an earthquake that took 230,000 lives making it the seventh deadliest in history after the recent Tsunami. Ibn Kathir ؓ described it as though the last day had occurred.

2. In 808 the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem was severely damaged in an earthquake and in 1015 it collapsed in another.

3. In 1927 an earthquake struck Palestine. The left wing attached to the Qibly Masjid in Aqsa came crashing down and was never rebuilt to this day.

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Majestic MOUNTAINS

Mountains are a creation of Allah Ta'ala which are mentioned in the Noble Quran and the Hadith. They played a role as the setting for significant events in the lives of the Prophets ﷺ.

Allah Ta'ala describes the purpose of the creation of mountains, "He has placed into the earth firm mountains, so it does not shake with you." (Noble Quran 16:15) Water is an unstable mass. Over 70% of the earth's surface is made up of water. Just trying to carry a full cup of tea or coffee is a challenge. Imagine the potential instability of the earth?

Describing it in more detail, Allah Ta'ala compares the mountains to pegs, "and (He made) the mountains as pegs." (Noble Quran 78:7) When you put up a tent, you tie ropes to pegs knocked into the ground to keep it secure.

After the creation of the earth, the land emerged from the water. Reports state that the first mountain placed on earth to keep it steady was the Abu Qubais mountain in Makkah Mukarramah. Accounts claim that it was from this mountain that the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam performed the miracle of splitting the moon. It is also reported to be the mountain where the Black Stone of the Kabah was stored for safekeeping during the flood of Prophet Nuh ﷺ. Imam Tabari writes that Prophet Aadam ﷺ is buried at the foot of the Abu Qubais mountain. Today, a royal palace is situated on top of it.

There is a theoretical question which is posed, "What would happen to the world if all the mountains disappeared?" Taking it in stages, geologists say that,

1. If all of Japan's land mass above sea level (weighing 440 trillion tons) was removed, the earth's centre of mass and axis of rotation would shift towards Uruguay. The change in the gravity pull would cause the oceans to slosh around, making them shift. Sea levels would rise along Uruguay's coast.
2. If all of Japan's mass was removed including the areas below sea level, it would result in sea levels and ocean currents changing.
3. If all the mountain ranges of the world were removed, there would be worldwide earthquakes and volcanoes would erupt. It would affect global weather patterns. Without mountains we would have to dig deeper into the earth for metals and minerals. The rain would fall directly on earth as a dangerous deluge, eroding farming land and destroying trees. Oxygen levels would drop. With Allah Ta'ala's system, the rain collects on the mountain tops, and feeds into the rivers and streams allowing us to use it with ease.

The fact mentioned in the Noble Quran 1400 years ago that mountains are for stability of the earth is corroborated by recent geological findings.

MOUNTAINS WERE THE SETTINGS FOR INCIDENTS IN THE LIVES OF THE PROPHETS ﷺ:

1. Prophet Musa ﷺ is returning to Egypt with his wife after spending some years in Madyan. He loses the way and sees a fire on Mount Toor of the Sinai. He approaches this mountain, receives revelation and speaks to Allah ﷻ. It is reported to be present day Jabal Musa in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. This is one of four mountains mentioned by name in the Noble Quran.

2. In another incident, Prophet Musa ﷺ requested to see Allah ﷻ. He was instructed to look at the mountain, and if it did not crumble he would see Allah ﷻ. When some of Allah ﷻ's Majesty was shown to the mountain, it crumbled to dust and Musa ﷺ fell unconscious. From the Hadith it would appear to be the same Mount Toor.

3. Prophet Nuh ﷺ's ark came to rest on the top of Mount Judi. This is the second mountain mentioned by name in the Noble Quran. What appear to be the remains of the ark are found on Mount Judi in southeast Turkey. The historian, Masudi in the 10th century wrote that he could see the spot in his time.

4. Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ wanted to see the reality of life after death. He was instructed to kill four birds, mix the pieces up and place them on

several mountains. When he called to them, the pieces all came back and reassembled in their original forms. After death, our bodies will reassemble into their previous forms with all atoms and disintegrated pieces coming together precisely.

5. An interesting mountain is found in Sri Lanka and called Adam's Peak in English. It is claimed to have the footprint of Prophet Aadam ﷺ on its peak. The traveller Ibn Battuta mentions climbing up the mountain to see it. Reports show that Prophet Aadam alahis salaam came down to earth in India after being sent out of Paradise, and specifically to Sri Lanka which was part of India.

One possible reason why so many different cultures across the world venerate or hold certain mountains as sacred could be due to the fact that their Prophets in their past had significant events in their lives take place at those mountains. The Greeks have Mount Olympus, and the Hindus hold Mount Kailash in Tibet as sacred. The Jews also hold certain mountains in high regard among them Temple Mount on the top of which is Masjid Al Aqsa. King Herod built retaining walls and filled in the mountain to create the relatively flat compound of Masjid Al Aqsa.

MOUNTAINS FEATURED IN THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET ﷺ AS WELL

1. Hira Mountain features the cave of Hira on its top. It was here that the Prophet ﷺ would go for periods of time to meditate before Prophethood. He received the first revelation of the Noble Quran here. It is also known as Jabal Noor. A way to achieve clarity of mind and peace of heart is to go alone or with one other person and contemplate the creation of Allah ﷻ, "Say, 'I only advise you of one thing - that you stand for Allah, (seeking truth) in pairs and individually, and then ponder.'" (Noble Quran 34:46) Natural settings like mountains also lend themselves to contemplation.

2. Mount Safa and Marwa are the two other mountains mentioned by name in the Noble Quran. They are the symbols of the Majesty of Allah ﷻ, "Safa and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah." (Noble Quran 2:158) Pilgrims walk between the two in emulation of the actions of Hajar, the wife of Prophet Ibrahim alaihmas salaam when she went in search of water. The first Madressa where Islam was taught was in Darul Arqam situated at the foot of Mount Safa.

3. Mount Uhud in Madinah Munawwarah served as the setting for the second battle of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ said regarding this mountain, "This is a mountain which loves us and we love it." It trembled in awe on one occasion when the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wa sallam stood on it together with Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthmaan ﷺ.

4. Mount Thawr is where the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr ﷺ spent three days in hiding while travelling on the Hijra (emigration) from Makkah Mukarramah to Madinah Munawwarah.

5. Mount Arafat is where the most important act of the Hajj takes place. It is also known as Jabal Rahmah. Arafah in Arabic means to recognise, and reports say that Prophet Aadam ﷺ and his wife were reunited at this place after coming down to earth from Paradise, thus giving the place its name.

DO MOUNTAINS AND OTHER INANIMATE OBJECTS OF NATURE HAVE ANY SENSE OF PERCEPTION?

The following verses and Hadith indicate towards them having a limited understanding:

1. A Hadith relates, "The Prophet ﷺ once climbed Mount Uhud with Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthmaan رضي الله عنه. The mountain shook them so the Prophet ﷺ said to it, 'Be still, O Uhud! For upon you is a Prophet, a Siddeeq and two martyrs.'" (Bukhari)

2. "The seven heavens, the earth, and all those in them glorify Him. There is not a single thing that does not glorify His praises, but you cannot comprehend their glorification." (Noble Quran 17:44)

3. "We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they all declined to bear it, being fearful of it." (Noble Quran 33:72) These creations including the mountains were offered the opportunity to carry out the worship of Allah ﷻ in return for reward and Paradise, and punishment and Hell for not carrying it out.

4. "We subjected the mountains to hymn Our praises along with (Prophet Dawood عليه السلام) in the evening and after sunrise." (Noble Quran 38:18) The Noble Quran and the mountains

"Had We sent down this Quran upon a mountain, you would have certainly seen it humbled and torn apart in awe of Allah." (Noble Quran 59:21) If the huge mountains would tremble had they been made to understand the Noble Quran, what about human beings? This is the power of the Noble Quran, able to make hearts tremble with the fear of Allah ﷻ. Why don't our hearts feel soft and humbled through the fear of Allah ﷻ?

There was a tree trunk which the Prophet ﷺ used to stand next to and deliver lectures. Then a Mimbar was built and he used that. The tree trunk was heard weeping. (Bukhari) Hassan al Basri رضي الله عنه said that if this was a tree trunk, how much more do we need to feel the love for the Prophet ﷺ?

Muhammad ibn Ka'b رضي الله عنه said that, "The one who regularly recites the Noble Quran is guaranteed a sound mind even if he lives for 200 years." (Bidayah)

ALLAH DESCRIBES TO US ANOTHER USE FOR MOUNTAINS:

"And Allah has provided you shade out of what He created and has given you shelter in the mountains." (Noble Quran 16:81) Mountains serve as places of refuge and fortresses. Many of the most glorious Muslim liberation struggles against invading forces took place in the mountains, places like Afghanistan, Chechnya, Daghestan and Kashmir. The people of these mountainous regions fought valiantly for their freedom.

Among the most famous people who lived in mountain cities are the Thamud. Among their lasting remains is the city of Petra with magnificent houses and structures carved out of solid mountains. "And Thamud who carved their homes into the rocks in the valley." (89:9) They demanded that Prophet Salih عليه السلام prove his Prophethood with a miracle and Allah ﷻ made a live pregnant camel come out of the solid rock.

Mountains

CLOSE TO QIYAMAH

As the world draws closer towards its final moments, mountains will play a role as the setting for significant events:

1. Abdullah ibn Amr رضي الله عنه stated that, "When you see tunnels/canals being dug in Makkah Mukarramah and the buildings going higher than the mountain peaks, then know that Qiyamah is close."

2. The Hadith tells us that a time will come when the best property of a Muslim would be sheep which he takes to the top of mountains and to the valleys to safeguard his faith from the extreme trials and tests. (Bukhari)

3. Yajooj and Majooj, the tribes who will cause tremendous chaos towards Qiyamah, are situated and contained in a land between mountains. (Noble Quran 18:93)

4. And when the earth comes to an end, the mountains will be crushed and blown away completely, "You will see the mountains, thinking they are firmly fixed, travelling just like clouds." (Noble Quran 27:88) These strong, seemingly immovable and invincible mountains will blow away like dust, clouds and wool.

EXAMPLES USING MOUNTAINS

1. Whoever joins a Janaza (funeral) of a Muslim and remains for the prayer and the burial will receive two rewards, each the size of Mount Uhud. And if the person only attends the prayer he will receive one reward. (Bukhari)

2. Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه was asked whether the Sahaba رضي الله عنهم laughed. He replied, "Yes, and

the faith in their hearts was greater than the mountains." Becoming pious does not mean one needs to remain permanently serious, gloomy and sullen. There needs to be a balance in one's life.

SOME LESSONS FROM MOUNTAINS

1. Appreciate the creation of Allah سبحانه. Relax your mind and heart by going out into nature and marvelling at the perfect system that Allah سبحانه has created. This will increase one's faith. Take a hike in the mountains and contemplate on the perfection in their creation.

2. The Noble Quran was too big a responsibility for the mountains, but we have been given the honour of reading it and following it. Continuously upgrade your attachment to the Noble Quran. We are going through trying times with load-shedding, water problems in some areas, a high crime rate. The only viable, lasting solution is to please Allah سبحانه, the One who controls all these things.

3. Build your faith by seeing the miracle of the Noble Quran accurately describing the function of mountains hundreds of years before geologists discovered it.

HADITH

VERIFICATION SERIES 11

In this series we bring you a selection of topics from hadithanswers.com



TWO SURAHS RECOMMENDED BY IMAM GHAZALI TO RECITE AFTER EATING

Question: Imam Ghazali has mentioned two short surahs to read after eating, Surah Ikhlas and Surah Quraysh.

Is this authentic?

Answer: Imam Ghazali has cited this as a recommended deed after eating without attributing it to any Hadith. It should be understood to be an etiquette after meals without deeming it Sunnah.

(Ihya 'Ulumid Din, vol. 3 pg. 27)

'Allamah Zabidi has explained the possible reason for this recommendation of Imam Ghazali. Reciting Surah Ikhlas will bring about barakah and repel poverty since it is equal to a third of the Quran. This Surah is called 'Surah Ikhlas' which should serve as a reminder for a person to check his sincerity. Further, this Surah mentions that Allah is 'Samad' i.e.

Self-sufficient/independent and does not require food and drink which is the opposite to us, humans. These should be kept in mind when reciting Surah Ikhlas.

Surah Quraysh discusses affection/unity and protection from hunger and fear. This should serve as a reminder for these bounties that a person just enjoyed.

(Ithafus Sadah al Muttaqin, vol. 5 pg. 225)

And Allah knows best.

TEACHING CHILDREN QURAN, A FORMULA FOR THE UMMAH TO REMAIN ON GOOD

Question: Is the following a Hadith:

This ummah (Muslim nation) will remain on good as long as they teach their children the Quran.

Answer: Imam Abu Bakr ibn 'Abid Dunya has recorded this narration as the statement of 'Abdullah ibn 'Isa, a Tabi'i and not as a Hadith of Rasulullah.

'Abdullah ibn 'Isa said: "This

ummah will remain on good as long as they teach their children the Quran."

(Kitabul 'Iyal: 309)

And Allah knows best.

QURAN RECITAL IS THE BEST FORM OF ZIKR IN RAMADAN

Question: Is it correct to say that reciting Quran is the best type of Zikr a person can do during Ramadan?

Answer: Yes, this is correct and is understood from the Hadith which states that Jibril would meet Nabi every night in Ramadan to revise the Quran. (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith: 6, Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 2308)

Hafiz Ibn Hajar has quoted 'Allamah Nawawi who has explained the lessons from this Hadith. One of the lessons is that Quran recital is the best form of Zikr. If there was any other recital better, Jibril and Nabi would have engaged in that.

(Fathul Bari, Hadith: 6, vol.1 pg. 31)

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Surah Mumin

THE LESSONS WE LEARN

LESSONS FROM SURAH MUMIN

Surah Mumin is the 40th Surah of the Noble Quran. It is the first of seven Surahs that begin with the letters Haa Meem. Collectively they are known as Aala Haa Meem or Hawaameem.

a. Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه says that these Aala Haa Meem Surahs are the decoration of the Noble Quran.

b. Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه says that everything has an essence, and the essence of the Noble Quran is Aala Haa Meem.

c. Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه compares the reciter of the Noble Quran to a traveller setting out to find a place for his family to settle. He comes to a place that has signs of good rainfall. While he is walking around and admiring it, he suddenly comes across beautiful gardens. He was impressed with the first place he found, but the what he sees after that is even better. Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه likens the first place

to the Noble Quran and the beautiful gardens to the splendour that is Aala Haa Meem.

d. Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه says that he enjoys then recitation of the Noble Quran, and when he reaches Aala Haa Meem it is like reaching a beautiful garden and he takes his time reciting to gain the full joy.

PASSION FOR THE NOBLE QURAN

This is the first lesson; that we need to love the Noble Quran like the Sahaba رضي الله عنهم did. The example is like that of a soccer fanatic. He didn't become a connoisseur or lover of the game overnight. Perhaps he was first introduced to the sport with a ball that his father kicked to him in his yard. Then he played matches with his friends, becoming more proficient and informed of the nuances of the game, the moves, and the good players. It then grew into a passion, such that for many it is a drug, replacing the emotion of worship.

We need to keep on improving our connection with the Noble Quran by reading, perfecting, becoming more fluent in recitation, understanding the meaning and practice on its message. Attending Qirat programs, Tafseer lessons, Tajweed and Hifz classes are some of the ways to enjoy the Noble Quran like the Sahaba رضي الله عنهم did.

WAYS OF PROTECTION

One of the ways to gain protection in these times of insecurity is to recite Ayatul Kursi (Noble Quran 2:255) and the first three verses of Surah Mumin early in the day. This is protect you from everything bad and painful during the course of the day. (Tirmidhi)

We are instructed to recite Haa Meem Laa Yunsaroon when we happen to come under any attack such as hijackings or robberies. (Tirmidhi)



THE FIRST VERSES OF SURAH MUMIN ARE VIVIDLY EVOCATIVE:

Verse 1: "The revelation of this Book is from Allah; the Almighty, All-Knowing,"

Verse 2: "the Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance, Severe in punishment, and Infinite in bounty. There is no god worthy of worship except Him. To Him alone is the final return."

1. The Forgiver of Sin. Allah ﷻ is the One who puts a cover over our sins. They are no more seen or even known by others. We might be pious now, but have a past of sins which people do not even know about. Allah ﷻ has the authority and power to forgive us without us even repenting. This might be due to some good deeds we do, or simply through His Mercy.

2. The Acceptor of Repentance. When we falter and commit a sin, then beg Allah ﷻ for forgiveness, we are guaranteed acceptance.

3. Severe in Punishment. While we rely on Allah ﷻ's forgiveness and mercy, we also remember that He is severe in punishing. These two attributes of forgiveness and punishment, and the resultant feelings of hope and fear go together. At times we are in a state of hope, at times fearful so that we do not become complacent, nor over-

whelmed with despair.

4. Infinite in Bounty. Allah ﷻ is the One who grants us blessings, is ever generous and the source of all the favours we enjoy in life. While we journey in this life, we strive, make connections, do our best and reap the rewards, but we never lose sight of the fact that the source of all our success and happiness is Allah ﷻ. As such, we should never fall short in pleasing Him.

"Indeed, sincere devotion is due only to Allah." (Noble Quran, 39:3) Allah ﷻ alone deserves our exclusive submission, adoration and worship.

THE EFFECT OF THESE VERSES

These verses have a powerful impact in reforming people. By reflecting on them, we come to the realisation that I need to make a change for the better in my life. I need to reform and please my most kind Allah ﷻ.

A Syrian man used to attend the gatherings of Hazrat Umar ﷺ. He didn't show up for a period of time. Umar ﷺ enquired from the people is they knew the reason. They replied that he should not even ask, as the man had become a drunkard. Umar ﷺ dictated a letter to him, quoting these opening

verses of Surah Mumin. Then he turned to those around him and said, "Let us pray to Allah ﷻ to reverse his heart and accept his repentance." He instructed the messenger to hand the letter to the man only, and only when he was sober. The man read the letter repeatedly and started to weep. He stopped drinking alcohol and made such a repentance that he never touched liquor again.

When Umar ﷺ heard this, he remarked, "You must do the same. When your brother falls into sin, or slips up, then think of wise methods to bring him back to his normal and better self. Encourage him to turn to Allah ﷻ, to trust in Him and to rely on His Mercy. Pray to Allah ﷻ for him, that he is given the opportunity to repent. Do not help Satan against him by infuriating him. This might only serve to turn him further away."

THIS IS HOW WE HELP OTHERS BECOME BETTER PEOPLE:

1. Make Dua for them.
2. Use gentle and wise ways to bring them towards reform.
3. Do not be aggressive for it might not help the person. It could rather amount to helping Satan as it would push him further away from goodness.

DISPUTING REGARDING THE NOBLE QURAN

Verse 4: "None disputes the signs of Allah except the disbelievers, so do not be deceived by their prosperity throughout the land." The Hadith tells us that disputing regarding the Noble Quran is disbelief. (Abu Dawood) Communities were ruined because they started quarrelling regarding the Book of Allah ﷻ. (Muslim) This includes taunts, passing sarcastic comments, engineering disputes or interpreting the verse of the Noble Quran in a way that is not in line with the Sunnah. We need to accept the rulings of the Noble Quran without bringing our own ideas into the picture. Honest enquiry about something that we sincerely wish to learn about does not fall under this prohibition.

"Do not be deceived by their prosperity throughout the land." The prosperous movements of the disbelievers between the cities should not deceive us. The disbelieving Quraish would travel to Yemen and Syria in their trade caravans. They were held in high esteem across Arabia. They remarked, "Had we been in the wrong, these blessings would have been taken away!" Muslims might also start doubting when they see the West far ahead in technological advancement and sophistication. They might become doubtful of the system of Islam. Here we are shown that their prosperity despite their disbelief is but a temporary respite given in the Wisdom of Allah ﷻ.

When the Prophets brought the message of Islam, the disbelievers exulted with the knowledge they had and rejected the message of the Prophets (Noble Quran, 40:83). Our knowledge of trade and commerce and industry and the sciences should never lead us to look down on the knowledge of Islam. "They know something superficial of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are oblivious." (Noble Quran, 30:7)

ANGELIC DUAS

Verse 7: "Those angels who carry the Throne and those around it glorify the praises of their Lord, have faith in Him, and seek forgiveness for the believers, praying: "Our Lord! You encompass everything in Your mercy and knowledge. So forgive those who repent and follow Your Way, and protect them from the torment of the Hellfire."

The angels pray for those who have faith and more especially for those who repent for their wrongs. They pray for them to enter Paradise and their families, and that they be saved from Hell.

When a Muslim enters Paradise he will ask about those of his family members who he does not see, wanting to know where they are. He will be told that their deeds were not like his so they would not be with him. He will reply, "Whatever good I did was not for me alone. It was for me and them." They will then also be admitted to Paradise and to his status. It is therefore crucial that we be close to the pious so that they may remember us in

the Hereafter. We should also motivate our children to be pious and better than us so that they may intercede for us.

Dua is a vital part of our lives. We don't know whose Duas are behind us. It could be those of the angels or our parents. We see success in life and it could be due to the sincere Duas of others for us. Constantly make Dua for ones kids and parents. The Duas that parents make for their children are readily accepted. Avoid negative words when speaking about kids for they might become a bad Dua for their lives. In good times and bad, set aside a time daily to ask from Allah ﷻ.

Verse 60: Your Lord has proclaimed, "Call upon Me, I will respond to you. Surely those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell, fully humbled."

Those who display arrogance in not asking from Allah ﷻ are on a slippery path. When a person leaves out Dua considering himself to have no need to make Dua, this arrogance can lead him to disbelief and Hell.

A special honour for the Muslims is that we are ordered to make Dua and the Dua will be accepted. This was previously a speciality of the Prophets of the past. Now it is a distinction given to the Muslim community.

Flower Bouquet

A man stopped at a flower shop to order some flowers to be sent to his mother who lived two hundred kilometres away. As he got out of his car he noticed a young girl sitting on the pavement sobbing. He asked her what was wrong and she replied, "I wanted to buy a red rose for my mother. But I only have seventy-five cents, and a rose costs two rands." The man smiled and said, "Come on in with me. I will buy you a rose."

He bought the little girl her rose and ordered his own mother's flowers. As they were leaving he offered the girl a ride home. She said, "Yes, please! You can take me to my mother." She directed

him to a cemetery, where she placed the rose on a freshly dug grave, that of her mother who had died recently.

The man returned to the flower shop, canceled the delivery order, picked up a bouquet and drove the two hundred kilometres to his mother's house.

Moral: Don't send artificial love to your parents with only lip service or gifts. Together with this, give them the respect and courtesy they desire. This is true love. They are your most precious treasure. Care for them. Once they leave this world then one can do nothing but regret and helplessly wish to be good to them.



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FRAXINET

The Story of the Few

Muslims in France, Switzerland and Italy

Fraxinet was the site of a 10th-century fortress established by Muslims at modern La Garde-Freinet, near Saint-Tropez, in Provence, France.

In about 889 a ship carrying twenty intrepid Muslims from Muslim Spain anchored in the Gulf of Saint-Tropez. They built a tiny stone fortification and established outposts. From here they extended their control over St-Tropez, as well as Ramatuelle and its peninsula.

The area was richly cultivated by its Muslim inhabitants, and they have been credited with a number of agricultural and fishing

innovations for the region. Fraxinet was a center of trade under the Muslims.

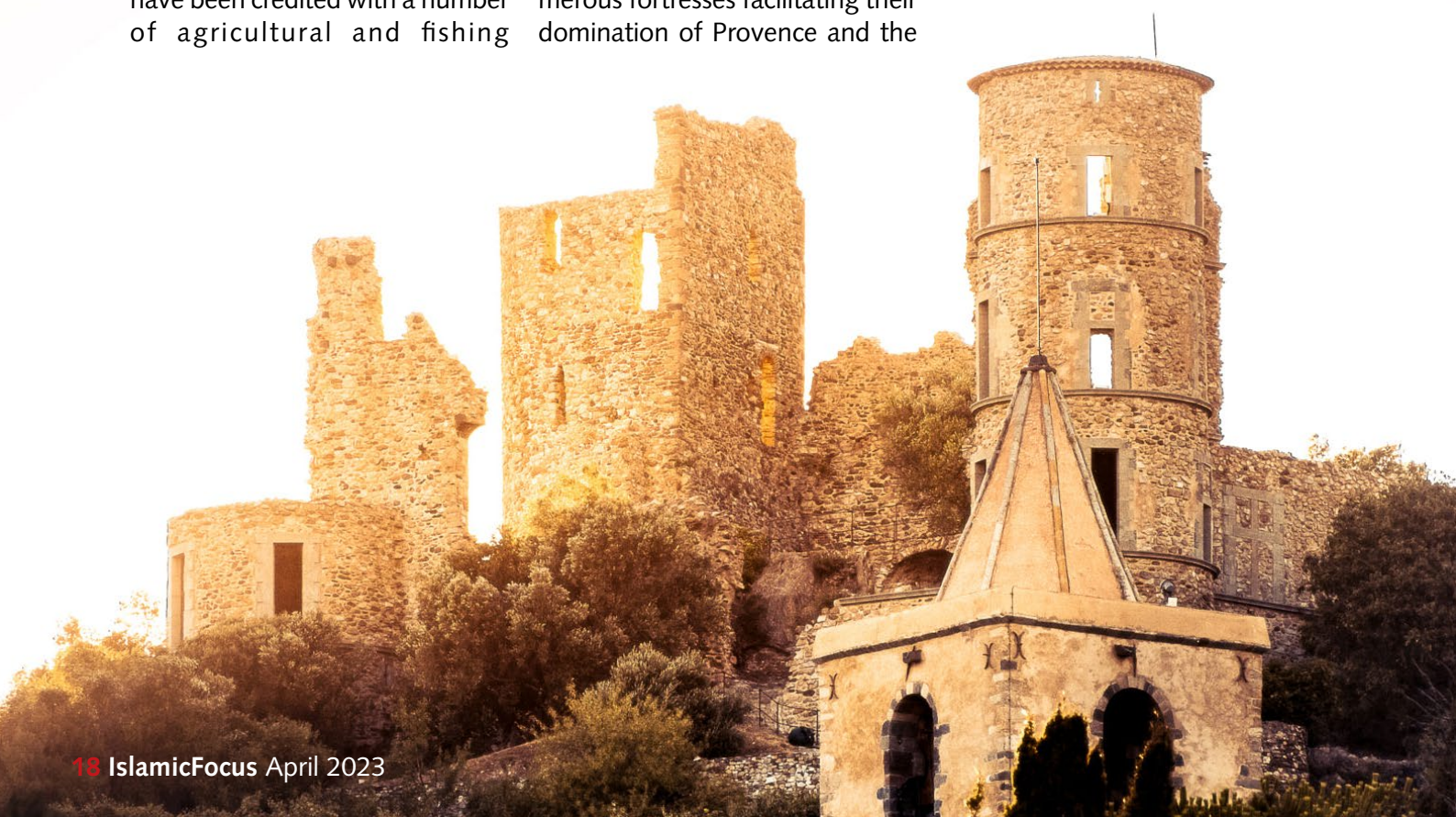
Within two decades of their arrival, the Muslims managed to subdue Provence in its entirety and even conducted raids as far as western Italy, where they occupied Acqui. Despite their small numbers, the Muslims conquered the land with relative ease.

By 939 the Muslims had crossed the Alps and raided what is today northern Italy as well as southern Switzerland. They established numerous fortresses facilitating their domination of Provence and the

Rhone Valley. They occupied and controlled the Alpine passes, effectively closing the connection between France and Italy.

All of this began with just twenty Muslims, eventually ruling central Europe and controlling its major trading routes for nearly a century.

On the day they suffered their final defeat at the Battle of Tourtour in 973 they numbered no more than 1,500 men.



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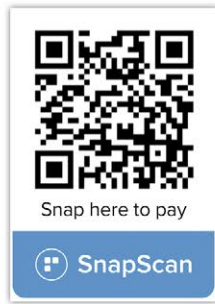
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